# New York Theatre Critics' Reviews 1950

Volume XI, Number 2 • Rachel W. Coffin, *Editor* • Week of January 23, 1950

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*Theatre Critics' Reviews brings you each week the complete reviews as they originally appeared in these New York newspapers.*

NEW YORK JOURNAL-AMERICAN
NEW YORK POST HOME NEWS
NEW YORK DAILY NEWS
NEW YORK MIRROR
NEW YORK WORLD TELEGRAM & THE SUN
NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE
NEW YORK TIMES

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*Yearly Subscription $25.00*

*Published by* CRITICS' THEATRE REVIEWS, Inc., 235 East 22nd Street, New York 10, N. Y.

# "The Man"

DAILY NEWS

January 20, 1950

## Dorothy Gish Has an Awful Time In a Pleasant Thriller, 'The Man'

By JOHN CHAPMAN

Being by nature and occupation a ghoul and a criminal, I had a happy time at the Fulton Theatre last evening watching Dorothy Gish suffering through the worst jam she has been in since the trouble that befell her in "The Birth of a Nation." The play is "The Man," and the fellow in the title role gives Miss Gish a session of terror that few heroines could live through.

And I don't think Miss Gish survived; my hunch is that she is somewhere upstairs in a house designed by Jo Mielziner, quite dead from some picturesque violence. This is only a hunch, of course, and she may be showing up again tonight at the Fulton. If she does turn up it's her own fault for being such a nice and trusting little lady.

**The Help Problem.**

"The Man," by Mel Dinelli, is what the movies call a psychological melodrama. All it aims for is suspense until it is time for the audience to go home. The movies have had most of the luck lately with this kind of thing, but the theatre used to do all right with "Night Must Fall," "Ladies in Retirement," "Kind Lady" and "Angel Street." "The Man" is the first effectual stage thriller in quite some time.

In this play Miss Gish is a lady in reduced circumstances who makes ends meet by taking roomers into her big, out-of-style house. She hires a casually-met young man to do a day's work of cleaning and floor-polishing. He is well-spoken and willing, but as cracked as a Milton Berle joke. He is a psychopath who goes out of his mind every hour or so and does bad things—and then can't remember what happened.

The man is a nice fellow in a way, for all he wants is to be loved by somebody. Miss Gish happens to be the one he has gone to work for, and when he locks her up in her own house so he can wax the floor in peace and quiet, she is in for a heck of a time. It is no fun for a nice, middle-aged lady to be imprisoned by a young nut.

**A Suspenseful Ending.**

The young nut is played by Don Hanmer, and Mr. Hanmer does very well. He manages to make some reality and sense out of what is frankly a make-believe horror role, and I admire him the way I used to admire Emlyn Williams when Mr. Williams was carrying a recently severed human head around in an expensive leather hat box.

There are a few other characters in the play, acted by Peggy Ann Garner, Robert Emhardt, Frank McNellis, Josh White Jr. and Richard Boone. The direction is by Martin Ritt, and I think Mr. Ritt is by nature and occupation a ghoul and a criminal, same as I am.

"THE MAN"

Play by Mel Dinelli; staged by Martin Ritt; scenery by Jo Mielziner; costumes by Julia Sze; presented by Kermit Bloomgarden at the Fulton Theatre, January 19, 1950. The cast:

Mrs. Gillis.....Dorothy Gish
Ruth.....Peggy Ann Garner
Mr. Armstrong..Robert Emhardt
Howard Wilton....Don Hanmer
Mr. Franks....Frank McNellis
Doug.....Josh White, Jr.
Mr. Stephens....Richard Boone

Synopsis: The time is the present and the entire action takes place in the living room and kitchen of an old Victorian style home situated in the unfashionable outskirts of a large American city. Act I. Scene 1. A morning in early winter. Scene 2. An hour later. Scene 3. Several hours later. Act II. A few minutes later.

Well, I hope Miss Gish shows up again tonight, because she is a swell girl and doesn't deserve all the fright she got last night. And I hope "The Man" has a pleasant run at the Fulton. The play has a cleverly suspenseful ending and it never pretends to be anything but what it is—an enjoyable thriller, well acted by two good people.

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Journal American

January 20, 1950

## Plenty of Good Acting In This Hair-Raiser

By ROBERT GARLAND

Although, on Broadway, night has fallen less deliberately and a kind lady has been less vulnerable than at the Fulton, they manage well enough between them in the hair-raiser of a play Mel Dinelli remembered and Kermit Bloomgarden last night presented in his favorite showcase.

If lights, instead of the theatre curtain, were lowered between the first act interludes—such property changes as are necessary could be managed under darkness—I think the suspense would be quicker in getting under way. Now, the suspense is twice built, lost and recovered.

**Nevertheless, Mr. Dinelli, who specializes in hair-raisers in Hollywood, builds to quite a climax in "The Man." Surely, if slowly, he brings you to the front of your chair, as they say he does in such two-dimensional make-believes as "The Spiral Staircase" and "The Window."**

But, as a specialist in hair-raising—he is, I understand, a guiding contributor to a radio program called "Suspense"—the author of "The Man" should know better than to let his audience down twice during the build-up of his play. Even once would have been too often . . .

At that, if your hair is in want of raising, it will be standing pretty much on end before "The Man" is over.

* * *

At the Fulton, Mrs. Gillis is a kind lady who takes a stranger into her house with good intentions. But, before night has fallen, she is regretful of her benevolence. For the stranger, who is Howard Wilton, is a victim of a sinister schizophrenia.

**Having been turned down by the Army, he is a potential killer who knows quite well that nobody—including the Navy—wants him. Or will put up with his dangerous unpredictability. If he is his own worst enemy, he is even more the enemy of his benefactress.**

For two acts and half-a-dozen interludes, "The Man" is a protracted duel between Mrs. Gillis and Mr. Wilton. The other characters, one of which is a charming Boston Terrier, are persistently beyond the play. They come within the house but remain without the action.

I'd be more of a rat than even a drama critic has a right to be if I told you the outcome of the Mr. Wilton-versus-Mrs. Gillis duel. To me, it is unexpected and believable. And the thrusts and parries leading up to it are as hair-raising as anything on Broadway . . .

**Neither Mrs. Branson in "Night Must Fall" nor Miss Herries in "Kind Lady" gets as tough a going-over as Mrs. Gillis in "The Man."**

* * *

During the summer of 1948, in the Westport Country Playhouse, I came upon Don Hanmer as the schizophrenic in Bessie Breuer's unsuccessful, yet unforgettable, "Sundown Beach." Then, later on Broadway, I called attention to the merits and promises of his performance.

These merits and promises are again evident as the schizophrenic in Mel Dinelli's "The Man." Here, as Howard Wilton, he has the hair-raiser's motivating role. In spite of its written-in monotony, he carries it to a climax with impressive talent.

**Dorothy Gish, who, since the age of three and "Her First False Step," has been trained to take it on the lam, suffers with force and fortitude as the victimized kind lady of Mel Dinelli's hair-raiser. Even when locked away with her dead dog, you feel her presence.**

The others, including Peggy Ann Garner, whose name is featured, and the Boston Terrier, whose name is not, compose a worthy frame for the Dorothy Gish-Don Hanmer set-to. And the background, by Jo Mielziner, could not be righter if it tried. Martin Ritt's direction could . . .

If, as I have said, your hair is ripe for raising, it will be well up on end before "The Man" is finished.

**The New York Times**

January 20, 1950

## AT THE THEATRE

By BROOKS ATKINSON

In case you want to be scared by someone who is psychopathic, "The Man," which opened at the Fulton last evening, may very well be what you need. Mel Dinelli, an old hand at shudder-shows, has written this one with diabolical precision. Dorothy Gish, one of our most cultivated ladies, makes a very fine victim — weak, good-hearted and trusting; and Don Hanmer makes a very fine killer of the mental institution type.

It takes Mr. Dinelli half the evening to get the stage set for torture and homicide. A certain Mrs. Gillis, one of the more worthy of the middle-class housewives, hires a certain Howard Wilton to help with the chores of housecleaning. After he is in the house, he turns out to be a dangerous maniac.

* * *

Since it is illegal for a reviewer to divulge the story of a thriller, this newspaper cannot tell you how Mrs. Gillis is tortured. But Mr. Dinelli knows how to plan a horror charade so that a theatregoer can be uncomfortable at least half the evening. Under Martin Ritt's direction, the performance is pleasantly harrowing. And all the acting is expert—Miss Gish being crumpled and helpless; Mr. Hanmer, cruel and sinister; Peggy Ann Garner, brash and bored, and the others being all right, too. By exercising heroic self-restraint, Jo Mielziner has designed a shabby living room and kitchen; and Julia Sze has chosen costumes that are frowzy enough to be plausible.

Having dutifully rendered a report, this column would now like to make a few grave remarks about the fallacy of offering psychotic people as villains in horror shows. About six weeks ago Alexander Knox brought us an insane man as a villain. Now Mr. Dinelli brings us another refugee from the mental wards.

* * *

This is obviously more learned than the old-fashioned melodramas. But it has a depressingly clinical attitude toward crime and it stacks the cards against casual enjoyment. For crime and torture there is nothing to compare with simple bad men who are motivated by the desire to commit larceny, the lust for murder and normal delight in breaking bones or suffocating people in dark closets.

Let's have a little free will about our blood-curdling festivities. Like "The Closing Door," "The Man" is a dilettante creep-show. It lacks gusto for torture and malfeasance. Mr. Dinelli's villian is a sick man. He does not delight in throttling helpless housewives.

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**New York Herald Tribune**

January 20, 1950

By HOWARD BARNES

*Superior Thriller*

A GRIM psychopathic melodrama has brought Dorothy Gish to the Fulton Theater in a superb portrayal of sheer terror. "The Man," by Del Dinelli, is an arrant thriller, but it is loaded with suspense and fine acting. With Don Hanmer supporting the star in a bravura characterization of a homicidal maniac with a persecution complex, this Kermit Bloomgarden production is first-rate fare for fanciers of horror shows. Jo Mielziner has designed a flexible American Victorian interior for the action and Martin Ritt's direction is as taut as it should have been.

* * *

Dinelli, who has been responsible for a couple of better than average screen shockers, has given himself plenty of rein in his choice of a theme. By introducing a crazy murderer into the home of a widow as a handyman, he has been able to manipulate his plot with scant regard for motivation or genuine dramatic continuity. The point is that he has done so with remarkably sustained suspense. The central idea may be thin and somewhat fraudulent, but it has emerged as an engrossing piece of theater. The plight of an elderly lady who is imprisoned in her own home by a madman has so much latent violence that it sustains a series of contrived situations.

* * *

Miss Gish's artistry flames surely throughout the proceedings. From the early scenes, in which she tries to give aid and comfort to a well-spoken boy with a disturbed mind, to the final terrible stanza, her performance is brilliantly modulated and appealing. Without her in the leading role "The Man" would lose a great deal of its compulsion. Her indignation at finding herself locked up with a man who does not know who he is or where he came from changes with subtle gradations to fright and quaking fear. In a play which can scarcely be called distinguished, she acquits herself notably.

* * *

Hanmer matches her acting with a tour-de-force of make-believe as the paranoiac. Whether he is throttling a dog in a closet, or coming close to murdering the widow's niece and a small grocery boy, he is tremendously menacing. His recital of events which led him to his insanity is exceedingly convincing, while his slow torture of an unsuspecting victim is downright chilling. Peggy Ann Garner makes her stage debut as the niece and Robert Emhardt, Frank McNellis, Richard Boone and Josh White jr. have minor bits; "The Man" is a superior thriller, graced with acute and authoritative acting.

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**Daily Mirror**

January 20, 1950

## 'The Man' Doesn't Have Enough Chills, Thrills

By ROBERT COLEMAN

The moral of Mel Dinelli's melodrama, "The Man," seems to be that middle-aged ladies living alone should demand references from strange young men they engage to wax their floors. Mrs. Gillis didn't, so after her boarder had gone on vacation, a psychopathic bully seized her house, killed her dog and —.

But we shan't tell you any more. It would spoil the climax for you, in case you see the show. Anyway, "The Man" is reminiscent of "Kind Lady," with "Night Must Fall" overtones, but not nearly so good as either of those thrillers. It lacks the genuine suspense and subtleties of "Kind Lady" and the sheer dramatic drive of "Night Must Fall."

"The Man" is really an overgrown one-act play, but it appears to be, in the sampling, much longer than it really is. It gets away to a slow and tedious start, and only begins to generate excitement in the second act. The villain is, for the most part, a dull and boring fellow, the victim of an inferiority complex. He wants to be liked, but he's tough to take.

Dorothy Gish, as the too-trusting house owner, and Don Hanmer, as the lunatic tough, play their parts for more than they are really worth. Peggy Ann Garner, of the films, does her best by a rather innocuous and petulant bobby-soxer. Robert Emhardt, Frank McNellis, Richard Boone and Josh White, Jr., labor valiantly in other roles.

Martin Ritt's direction is too slowly paced in the beginning, but makes the concluding passages effective. Jo Mielziner has contributed an atmospheric setting.

To be successful, melodramas must be packed with chills, thrills and a measure of novelty. "The Man" hasn't enough of these qualities for a full evening's entertainment. We can only wonder why Kermit Bloomgarden, a producer who has been associated heretofore with such excellent fare as "Death of a Salesman," should have thought it worth presenting at the Fulton Theatre last evening.

New York World-Telegram
and
The ~~Evening~~ Sun

January 20, 1950

# 'The Man's' Cards Dealt From Bottom

By WILLIAM HAWKINS.

"The Man" is a thriller which may have a long life in television, regardless of how well it fares in the theater. Its peculiarly concentrated construction makes it a tour de force on the stage. Despite expert performances, and some fertile direction, it simply is not as absorbing as you wish it were for the couple of hours it lasts.

Oddly enough, the authenticity of the situation and characters is the play's greatest fault. The people are not always rational (as who would be under the circumstances?) and the situations are not hoked up except as a last desperate resort.

The result is a lack of variety, and a thinness of dramatic texture. "The Man" is like factual reporting of a story which seems a natural as a play, but isn't, quite.

Mrs. Gillis is one of those widows with a big, ugly old house, who takes in an odd boarder, probably as much out of loneliness since her son's death in the war as for any financial assistance.

**She'll Help Him.**

On her big cleaning day she has hired a young man to help with the heavy work, and if it were not for missing her own son she probably would have sent this Howard on his way fast. He is touchy, finicky, irritable and peculiar, but Mrs. Gillis believes she can help him.

Gradually it develops that Howard forgets where he lives, and has all kinds of persecution complexes. He never goes back to work in the same place a second time, because he is never quite sure what sort of violence he may have committed during "blind flashes." He begins to think of this house as a haven. Coincidentally with needing Mrs. Gillis' affection, he grows wary of her lies and her attempts to escape after he has locked her in the house.

The play is purely a struggle between these two people. Mrs. Gillis, as her fear heightens, takes more desperate chances. As each time he apprehends her Howard becomes more outraged and antagonistic.

There are three or four ingenious climaxes in the last few minutes of the play. But it is along about this time that cards are dealt from the bottom of the pack by the author. A particularly irritating little grocery boy provides the most contrived situation, and this artificial sequence does not pave the way very happily for the clever triple surprise ending.

**Brave Performances.**

On the stage without a break are Dorothy Gish and Don Hanmer, as Mrs. Gillis and the cleaning man. Both of them are giving brave, resourceful and varied performances, which properly contrast with each other.

Miss Gish's role is one almost entirely of reaction. She rarely takes more than brief desperate initiative. The rest of the time she is accumulatively appreciating her dilemma. The way the role is written, she is more revolted and terrified than determined, and it is entirely because of her conviction and sympathy as an actress that only afterward do you wonder why she didn't conk the young man over the head with a frying pan.

Mr. Hanmer has an assignment which should delight any actor worth his salt, and he handles it in first-rate style. This is a quixotic mental case, yearning and hurt, then bitter, then bullying and vicious. The changes are quick, but they are all reasonable. It is an extraordinarily long and demanding role, and Mr. Hanmer is never at a loss.

Peggy Ann Garner has a couple of bright and brittle scenes as Mrs. Gillis' niece, Robert Emhardt is a believable if ephemeral boarder and Josh White Jr. is excellent in the manufactured character of the grocery boy.

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# New York Post
## HOME NEWS

January 20, 1950

## Beware of Odd Young Strangers

## By Richard Watts Jr.

The quest for a good, chilling, sinister melodrama was pursued with ardor, intensity and grimness at the Fulton Theatre last night, with the arrival of "The Man," a play about one of those psychopathic killers, by Mel Dinelli, a writer for radio and the motion pictures. Quite a lot of suspense and intensity is engendered by Mr. Dinelli's single-minded narrative, and there is some good acting to help, but I can hardly say that "The Man" is just the sort of exercise in crime for which some of us addicts have been praying.

Let it be said for the author of the new melodrama that he doesn't waste time on frills. With almost academic respect for the dramatic unities, he sets down the case history of an odd young man who gets a job with a sympathetic and excessively kind-hearted lady, and then proceeds to dominate and kill her. There is little more than a straightforward account of the youthful psychopath's ugly activities in the poor lady's house, together with a study of his twisted and befuddled mind. It is all simple and to the point.

**Atmosphere and Mood**

It may be further said to the playwright's credit that he knows how to create an atmosphere of reality and a mood of consistent tension and suspense. You are not likely to find your attention wandering during the course of "The Man," whatever else you may feel about it. But there are less commendable things to say about the work. For one objection, there is too much in it that is reminiscent of "Night Must Fall" and "Kind Lady" for the playgoer with a memory. For another, it retains some of the air of an expanded radio show, as indeed it is.

As a soul-satisfying melodrama it has even deeper flaws than these. Perhaps Mr. Dinelli has the curious defect of being too honest to provide the sort of trickery that might have made his play good fun for those who are fond of theatrical crime stories. I, for one, would have been more satisfied if he had devised a more ingenious ending than the simple and no doubt logical one he has provided. In addition, I am afraid that his studiously realistic contemplation of the young maniac is more depressing than exciting.

**Virtue and Villainy**

It seems to me that one of the greatest virtues of these suspense melodramas is that they are infantile enough to let virtue triumph and cause you to hate the villain while you wait for him to be vanquished. It is unquestionably more adult of Mr. Dinelli to make his murderer pitiful rather than villainous and not to permit the monster's victim to escape, but it requires more skill than the play possesses to make such material moving and important, and meanwhile the final satisfaction of good melodrama is omitted.

As I have said, the acting is fine. Dorothy Gish is both pathetic and real as the victim, and a good young actor named Don Hanmer is completely believable as the complex but rather tedious psychopath. In smaller roles that might well have been larger, Peggy Ann Garner, Robert Emhardt, Josh White Jr., Richard Boone and Frank McNellis are excellent. The direction of Martin Ritt and the setting by Jo Mielziner add greatly to the proper mood. But "The Man" remains more painful than thrilling.

# "The Enchanted"

**Daily Mirror**
January 19, 1950

## 'Enchanted' a Fascinating, Absorbing Adventure

By ROBERT COLEMAN

The trouble with most playwrights is that they don't have enough to say. But the trouble with Jean Giraudoux is that he has too much to say. Tossing ideas and philosophic concepts at you almost continuously, he has too little space left in his scripts for dramatic action. Take "The Enchanted," for instance, which David Lowe and Richard Davidson brought to the Lyceum Theatre last evening.

It is one of the most interesting and rewarding comedies to arrive in New York in many semesters, and it demands the constant attention of the playgoer. Shift stance in your seat, cough for an instant or read program notes with a flashlight—and you are sure to miss some of the Frenchman's sagest lines.

In fact, like good music, we doubt that you can catch all of its facets in a single sitting. It might take two or three visits to savor all its nuances and content to the full.

Presently Giraudoux is concerned with a young woman school teacher, who throws a French province into confusion by her unorthodox methods of instruction and by seeing the ghost of a handsome young man. She is relieved of her post easily by an official from Paris, but it takes quite a bit of doing, and the affection of a sympathetic suitor, to exorcise the ghost.

Giraudoux, like Thoreau and Dostoievsky, comes to grips with the meaning of life and death, with what men do and should do, with what they should live and die by, of the conflict between skeptic and believer, realist and romanticist, scientist and mystic.

In a brief review, it is impossible to tell you all he has to say, though we suspect that he is on the side of the romanticist and the mystic. He says, in sum, life today is without spirit, truth without beauty, and death without dignity.

Lowe and Davidson have given "The Enchanted" a competent if not inspired production. We may be wrong, but we have the feeling that Maurice Valency's adaptation and George S. Kaufman's direction miss some of the singing lyricism and the graceful irony of the French originals. We think there's more to Giraudoux than meets the ear at the Lyceum.

Leueen MacGrath gives an intelligent and sincere, if not notably stylized, performance as the imaginative school teacher. Malcolm Keen, Wesley Addy, Charles Halton, Russell Collins, Una O'Connor, John Baragrey and a corps of wonderful children lend able support. Robert Edmond Jones, dean of scenic designers, also makes an atmospheric contribution.

Personally, we prefer "The Enchanted" to Giraudoux's "The Madwoman of Chaillot." It has more depth and weight, though it is less showy. It is a real challenge to a playgoer's cerebral as well as emotional faculties. We are going to see it again and again, and we hope you will see it at least once. It towers head and shoulders above the customary wares of the commercial theater.

We loved it so, and we believe the Barrie who penned "Dear Brutus" would, too, if it were possible for him to return from Giraudoux's delightful half-world. We salute Lowe and Davidson for their courage in thinking that Mr. and Mrs. Average Playgoer have minds and hearts, are capable of enjoying a fascinating and absorbing adventure.

**"THE ENCHANTED"**

Comedy by Jean Giraudoux; adapted by Maurice Valency; staged by George S. Kaufman; scenery by Robert Edmond Jones; music by Francis Poulenc; dances by Jean Erdman; presented by David Lowe and Richard Davidson at the Lyceum Theatre, January 18, 1950. The cast:

The Mayor.....Charles Halton
The Doctor.....Russell Collins
Isabel.....Leueen MacGrath
The Little Girls:
Gilberte.....Carolyn Grier
Daisy.....Judith Licata
Lucy.....Mimi Strongin
Viola.....Leah Chernin
Denise.....Patricia Wright
Irene.....Betty Richardson
Marie-Louise..Henrietta Catal
The Inspector...Malcolm Keen
The Supervisor...Wesley Addy
Armande Mangebois.....
Frances Williams
Leonide Mangebois.....
Una O'Connor
The Ghost.....John Baragrey
1st Executioner..Joe E. Marks
2nd Executioner..James O'Neill
Monsieur Adrian..John O'Hare
Papa Tellier.....Roland Wood

Synopsis: Act I. A clearing in the woods just outside a provincial town in France. Late afternoon. Act II. The same. A few weeks later. Act III. Isabel's room in the town.

**DAILY NEWS**
January 19, 1950

## 'The Enchanted' a Hard-Working French Fantasy, Very Well Acted

By JOHN CHAPMAN

In "The Enchanted," which was quite beautifully acted and produced at the Lyceum Theatre last evening, the dead have quite a lot of conversation with the living and vice versa. I, personally, came away from the first performance in a mixed-up state of great admiration and more than slight confusion.

If I were talking to the author, Jean Giraudoux, who has been dead a number of years, I'd say in my best French, "Monsieur Giraudoux, you are pulling my, shall we say, leg, is it not?" If I were talking to Maurice Valency, the adapter—who did so splendidly with Giraudoux' "The Madwoman of Chaillot"—I'd say, "Mister Valency, you have made a very smooth and witty comedy out of a smooth and witty comedy."

If I were talking to George S. Kaufman, the director, I'd say, "Mr. Kaufman, your wife, Leueen MacGrath, is an utterly lovely darling in the leading feminine role, Malcolm Keen is splended as the archetype of all stuffed shirts, and generally speaking your company is admirably chosen and knowingly directed."

**Endorses the Race.**

But I can't be gabbling to these people when you readers are the ones being addressed at the moment. To you-all I'll say "Jean Giraudoux gives the human race quite a pasting in 'The Enchanted,' but toward the end of the third act he endorses it. By the time he has endorsed it, however, I have become quite disgusted with the human race and have also begun to yearn for the fine simplicity of a John Ford Western movie. This is the kind of play which makes you think you are thinking, and if you are the type who enjoys thinking you are thinking you will find nothing better in the theatre than 'The Enchanted.' You will also be glad to learn that the human race, as personified by Miss MacGrath and her swain, Wesley Addy, is not too bad a club to belong to if you can't get into anything better. But if you found, as I did, that 'The Madwoman' was quite wonderful, you will be disappointed by this one."

**Many Witty Lines.**

Giraudoux and his spiritual interpreter, Valency, have made a fantasy about life and death. Death, in the very attractive person of a ghost played by John Baragrey, is a persuasive suitor of Miss MacGrath's, but nobody else likes him much. His chief opponent is a representative of official government, the Inspector, played by Mr. Keen.

There are many fine and witty Giraudoux lines, well spoken by the principals and by such able players as Russell Collins, Charles Halton, Una O'Connor and James O'Neill. All these lines tend toward making us humans—and particularly those of us who let our lives be run by official government—feel foolish, and they make us laugh at ourselves. There are a couple of pretty good sets by Robert Edmond Jones, and there is some nice music of the "Lieutenant Kije" variety by Francis Poulenc.

In fact, "The Enchanted" should be a simply wonderful play—splendidly acted, skillfully directed and highly civilized. Probably it is, too, and I'm just too insensitive to know a good thing when I see it.

NEW YORK Herald Tribune
January 19, 1950

= By HOWARD BARNES =

*No Enchanted Evening*

JEAN GIRAUDOUX'S "The Enchanted" has been endowed with delightful acting and superior staging at the Lyceum. All that is wanting in this posthumous production of the French dramatist's fantasy is a coherent and unified dramatic pattern. In the translation by Maurice Valency, who adapted "The Madwoman of Chaillot" last season, there are barbed thrusts at civil servants, a love triangle involving a ghost and a great deal of metaphysical musing. The author juggled his ideas with considerable eloquence, but they are more contrived than illuminating. Leueen MacGrath, Russell Collins, Wesley Addy, Malcolm Keen and their colleagues contribute the chief delight to a jejeune entertainment.

* * *

Essentially the play deals with the follies of conventional existence in the early '30s, when the work was first produced in Paris. The presence of a ghost in a French provincial town causes an irate inspector to storm at the villagers' sudden acquisition of happiness and have the hapless apparition shot. The notion gave Giraudoux the opportunity to take varied and frequently amusing pokes at bureaucracy, but they become repetitive and rather tiresome after three acts. The love story, involving a lovely school teacher, the ghost of a murderer and a very correct supervisor of weights and measures, has passages of fine invention and emotional appeal, but it rarely soars into the realm of high fancy.

* * *

Certainly "The Enchanted" is no match for "The Madwoman of Chaillot," which the author wrote a decade later. His championing of death is confused and his resolution of a tangled plot is far from artful. Without performing of the first order most of the drama would be sheer clap-trap. There are delightful scenes throughout, such as that in which the schoolteacher demonstrates her unconventional methods of education to the inspector, or that in which two executioners are charged with the task of ridding the town of a spirit which has brought it a measure of serenity. For all of George S. Kaufman's cunning direction, they are dimmed by a muddle of aphorisms, metaphors and odd pronouncements on a wide range of subjects.

* * *

Miss McGrath brings most of the radiance to the offering in a superb portrayal of the girl who is tempted to go off with a ghost. She is at once rapt and very sensible, which is quite a trick to work. John Baragrey is less successful as the figure from the grave, but Addy is fine as the devoted supervisor, who keeps Isabel from a grim rendez-vous. Meanwhile Collins is excellent as the doctor, who knows how to put the forces of nature in harmony, Charles Halton does well with the role of the mayor and Una O'Connor is wonderful as a village gossip. Robert Edmond Jones has designed appropriate settings for the action. It is only a pity that the action is too frequently meaningless. Incidentally the music by Francis Poulenc is a sheer delight.

The New York Times
January 19, 1950

AT THE THEATRE

By BROOKS ATKINSON

Jean Giraudoux' "The Enchanted" is a whimsical discussion of the spirit world. Nothing about the play, however, is so whimsical as the fact that it lacks spirit. To lovers of "The Madwoman of Chaillot" "The Enchanted" is likely to be a disappointment, for it contains none of the raffish and solid humanity of that divine rumpus in faubourgs, and it substitutes talk for improvisation. "The Enchanted" has been lovingly produced at the Lyceum, where it opened last evening, and the acting is respectful and intelligent. But the performance, like the play, lacks buoyancy and sparkle.

Since the theatre was Giraudoux' avocation, he brought to it the freshness and purity of the amateur. But there is another aspect of the amateur that is less interesting in the theatre: a fondness for words and abstractions. "The Enchanted" hardly ever gets its feet on the ground until the last act, when some recognizable and likable people take charge of it. Most of the comedy toys with some pretty unsubstantial ideas.

* * *

It is the story of a charming young lady in a provincial town of France who is obsessed with belief in spirits and other aspects of make-believe. Most of the townsmen are tolerant of her obsession, especially since the town as a whole is abnormally happy. But the government inspector regards her traffic with spirits as a threat to order, security and the safety of the state. He summons all the authority and powers of the state to rid her of this dangerous obsession. In the last act, she falls in love, which introduces her to the glory of the normal world and accomplishes in a split second what the inspector and the law cannot do by force or logic.

In a French production with French actors, it is possible that this droll speculation might be mettlesome and exciting. For there is obviously something missing in the current production. It does not seem to be Maurice Valency's English version, which has grace, flow and wit and which catches the humors of character on the wing. There are some alluring thoughts in "The Enchanted"—some ironic gibes at the state and respectability, some tender expressions of sympathy for children and imaginative people. It is the work of a civilized mind with a capacity for topsy-turvy reverie.

* * *

But spirits are elusive things in the theatre, as well as in life, and "The Enchanted" has little substance as a drama. Robert Edmond Jones has set it and costumed it with that genius for spacious, limpid beauty that animates all his work. And George S. Kaufman has cast it and directed it with his usual conscientious thoroughness.

Leueen MacGrath, who first appeared here in "Edward, My Son" last season, plays the central part charmingly if a little pallidly and timidly. Malcolm Keen gives an amusingly apoplectic performance as the choleric government inspector. As the village doctor, Russell Collins gives another one of his warm and forthright characterizations. Wesley Addy is wonderfully persuasive in the last act as a courageous suitor; and Charles Halton is entertaining as a dazed Mayor of the town. John Baragrey plays the part of a visitor from the spirit world pleasantly.

Fortunate is the musician in a case like this one. He can weave a spell over a play with a few chords out of a band of instruments. In this instance he is Francis Poulenc, who has written a brief score that is never affected or precious. On the whole, the music is the most successful part of the production. For the performance is on the literal side and the play is wanting in the kind of enchantment that makes ghosts, spirits, dreams and fantasies exhilarating in the theatre.

New York World-Telegram and The Sun
January 19, 1950

# King Fantasy Rules In 'The Enchanted'

By WILLIAM HAWKINS.

In "The Enchanted," New York audiences sample the unique genius of Jean Giraudoux for the third time.

Where his "Amphytrion" was the luxurious wit of sophistication, and "The Madwoman of Chaillot" the fine mad humor of high anger, "The Enchanted" is a gentler fantasy, though scarcely less entertaining.

In this work, the French playwright lets a lovely young schoolteacher grow restless with the stubborn orthodoxy of the world. She is consequently intrigued with the thought that the dead, past worry, might return to life and teach the quick how to live.

In a forest this lovely Isabel meets what she believes is the ghost of a handsome young man who has killed his wife and her lover, then presumably committed suicide.

**Ghost Comes Back.**

So eager is she for a link to his more honest, receptive world, that after the young man is shot by the stuffy town officials, in terror of the supernatural, Isabel's faith brings the ghost back.

There follows a fine conflict. The modest Supervisor tries to make her see what wild romance there can be in even a simple life. The Ghost would like to take her back so she can show the other dead the freedom and beauty she believes they should have.

As is so often true of Giraudoux's works, this play gives one the feeling of forceful conflict and a wealth of gymnastics. That the action is almost entirely intellectual is beautifully concealed by the production, and so brilliantly projected by the writing, that one could not be more absorbed by a blood and thunder melodrama.

For all his infinite, often sophisticated wisdom, Giraudoux's ultimate strength lies in his vast innocence. Because he has the purest kind of faith, he convinces you without trying that the impossible can happen to people who wish it.

**Kaufman in Fine Form.**

George S. Kaufman has done one of his best jobs in years, directing an extraordinary cast with a dry sort of containment that never lets any of them seem to be "acting," and does the play the honor of letting it speak for itself. Robert Edmond Jones contrasts are only slightly eerie and

unreal glade, with the clear warm last act interior.

Leueen MacGrath is delicate and fragrant, ethereal but strong as the teacher. Malcolm Keen seemed faultless in the role of the Inspector who operates on the principle that there is not enough unhappiness, and Charles Halton is a gentle, rational Mayor, when allowed to be by his compatriots.

**A Fine Ghost.**

Wesley Addy is a perfect combination of the prim and the stalwart as the worldly lover who finds joy even in weights and measures, and John Baragrey suggests the romance and the stillness so important for the ghost. Una O'Connor has some brief sharp moments as a deaf gossip, gently abetted by Frances Williams as her sister. Russell Collins is distinctive in his borderline moods as the doctor whose imagination lets him see that Isabel's desires are more real than other people's facts.

## New York Post
### HOME NEWS
January 19, 1950

# Jean Giraudoux in Expert Hands
## By Richard Watts Jr.

The playful, rather metaphysical fancy of the late Jean Giraudoux, which it is not easy to capture in the American theatre, is in excellent hands in George S. Kaufman's intelligent staging, with the happy result that Maurice Valency's adaptation of the French dramatist's comedy known in English as "The Enchanted" emerged at the Lyceum last night as a fresh and engaging fable. I suspect that it is basically less arresting than Giraudoux' successful "The Madwoman of Chaillot," but it seems to me far more fortunate in its direction, acting and Valency adaptation.

This time the playwright is telling in ruefully humorous fashion of a threatened uprising of the ghosts in a French provincial town. Under the auspices of a sensitive girl with a sentimental interest in phantoms, the dead seem to be taking such an interest in improving the lot of the living that government begins to think the whole thing must be subversive. There is, in particular, a handsome young phantom with whom the girl is sorely tempted to elope. In the end the potential revolt fails to take place and the living return to their old ways, which may or may not be a blessing.

**Pitfalls Avoided**

Stories in which unworldly young women have romantic yearnings for death and a ghostly lover are dangerous material for the stage or the novel, since an unwholesome pall tends to hang over them and their heroine usually proves to be a rather disagreeable mental case. It is the most admirable achievement of "The Enchanted" that it avoids all such pitfalls handsomely. The mood is always humorous, sprightly and satirical rather than sentimental, and the suggestion that the girl is a little disappointed in the stodginess of her phantoms saves her from seeming too macabre.

Despite the skill with which the central situation is managed, it is my impression that the new play is better in its parts than in its main story. The tale of the girl and the ghost may occasionally falter, but there is invariably some incidental item, as hilarious as the episode of two erudite public executioners or as charming as a young earthling's account of the wonderful adventure of being a member of the department of weights and measures, to brighten the evening with gayety or beauty.

**George Kaufman**

Always there is the pleasure of watching intelligent theatrical imagination at work, and for this the credit goes not only to the playwright and his adapter but also to Mr. Kaufman for his direction. Although he has had trouble in his recent jobs of staging, Mr. Kaufman has rarely shown more creative expertness than in his brilliant handling of an odd and difficult script. There is likewise fine assistance from the incomparable Robert Edmond Jones' charming sets and Francis Poulenc's incidental and atmospheric music.

Then there is the excellence of the acting. Leueen MacGrath is lovely and luminous as the girl, offering a performance of real lyric beauty. There is a delightfully pompous caricature of an indignant bureaucrat by the forceful Malcolm Keen, and effective work by John Baragrey as the ghostly lover and Wesley Addy as the living suitor. The expert Russell Collins gives one of his best characterizations as an understanding doctor, while Charles Halton as the troubled mayor is of much help, as are Una O'Connor and the rest of the cast including seven children. "The Enchanted" is a welcome newcomer.

## Journal American
January 19, 1950

# A Fascinating Play In Four Dimensions

By ROBERT GARLAND

To me, there is a fascinating tragicomedy of life, death and the hereafter at the Lyceum. I am not sure you will like it. I like it very much. If you do not, I like it just the same.

Which is a way of reporting that, 17 years after its Paris premiere the Jean Giraudoux "Intermezzo" is on Broadway. The producing pennon is that of David Lowe and Richard Davidson. The English title is "The Enchanted." The adapter is Maurice Valency, who performed the same operation on the same French dramatist's "Le Folle de Chaillot."

E ver so often a theatre-reporter must go out on a limb and take a stand. A precarious position, to be sure. But it is good for his morale and a privilege with "The Enchanted."

**If you found "The Madwoman of Chaillot" fantastical, wait until you sit in the presence of "The Enchanted." The new arrival adds life-after-death to its whimsicalities. Imagine Rudyard Kipling's "The Brushwood Boy," G. K. Chesterton's "Magic," Alberto Casella's "Death Takes a Holiday," Noel Coward's "Blithe Spirit" and—**

You may not have "The Enchanted" but you will have some idea that the importation is in four dimensions, moving from one to another and back again with neither rhyme nor reason.

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## A Ghost Walks

The story of "The Enchanted" is impossible to tell. Suffice it to suggest that it has to do with a provincial French schoolma'am with a class of little girls and a fine flair for necromania.

In a grove beyond her town, a ghost is fond of walking.

A young and handsome phantom, he has a come-on in his eye. Isabel, the lovely lady necromaniac, is fond of him He is fond of her. At nightfall, they and the pupils play pretty little games. Papa, mama and the like. Later on, the pupils retire.

Not unnaturally, The Mayor and his townsmen hear about the in-and-out-of-this-world goings-on. He, in the name of France and all France stands for, appoints himself a one-man exorciser.

**For company and support, The Mayor takes The Doctor with him. And, later, The Inspector, The Supervisor, The First and Second Executioner, and Armande and Leonide Mangebois, maiden busybodies of the province. But, when all is said and done, the exorcisement is up to him alone. His final success is —a failure.**

Maurice Valency, the Columbian who has adapted "Intermezzo" into "The Enchanted," points out that the madwoman of Chaillot is the necromaniac grown old. Could be!

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## Splendid Cast

Under George S. Kaufman's direction Leueen MacGrath—"Louween McGra" if you care to take the trouble—is an enchanting heroine of "The Enchanted." She seems to know the answers!

**Miss MacGrath, who is Mrs. Kaufman, came from England to play Robert Morley's secretary in "Edward, My Son." Last Summer, I went to Pennsylvania's Mountainhome to cheer her as Miss Giddens in "The Innocents," William Archibald's dramatization of Henry James' "Turn of the Screw." Now I cheer her in "The Enchanted."**

The entire cast at the Lyceum could scarcely be bettered. Malcolm Keen, as The Inspector, Wesley Addy as The Supervisor and Charles Halton as The Mayor are both fine and funny.

Una O'Connor and Frances Williams are as comic as should be as the Sisters Mangebois. Russell Collins is as good as ever as The Doctor. John Baragrey is a personable young Ghost. As the First and Second Executioner, Joe E. Marks and James O'Neill are not unlike the First and Second Gangster of "Kiss Me, Kate."

**To me, "The Enchanted" remains a fascinating tragicomedy of life, death and the hereafter. I still am not sure you will like it—I still do. Go to the Lyceum and find out for yourself!**

# "Alive and Kicking"

## New York Post
### HOME NEWS
January 18, 1950

## Another Opening, Another Revue

### By Richard Watts Jr.

The joy of playgoing is not appreciably added to by the new revue called "Alive and Kicking," which opened at the Winter Garden last night. Although a lot of talents of various kinds and degrees of merit went into the making of this fairly elaborate show, I'm afraid they rather tended to spoil the broth. There are some good people and good numbers distributed throughout the proceedings, but the final result is disappointingly mediocre entertainment.

Although he is not my favorite contributor to the evening, I suppose it is Jack Cole who gives "Alive and Kicking" its chief claim to style. Mr. Cole has staged, and participates in, a number of fierce, angular, exotic dances, which, while I thought they ended by being a trifle monotous, have excitement, vividness and imagination about them and bear a strong stamp of individuality. There is no doubt that Mr. Cole is a choreographer of skill.

**David Burns**

Since, however, I have an inescapable preference for comedians over serious dance directors, I confess to a greater interest in the activities of David Burns, a clown in the best tradition of low comedy. The sketches are not the strong point of the new show, and the ones in which Mr. Burns figures are better in conception than execution, but he is funny in all of them, and, when he gets a chance, as in the number in which he is an increasingly irate author lecturing on urbanity, he is wonderful. On the whole, though, he is wasted.

Apparently my weakness for comics does not extend to lady clowns, because Lenore Lonergan, who has grown into quite a bouncing comedienne, seemed to me of interest in reverse proportion to the number of her appearances. Since it was my impression last night that Miss Lonergan turned up in virtually every number, once even emerging in one of the Jack Cole dances, I thought that, despite her enviable industry and exuberance, she began to be a little overpowering. By the way, she, too, is at her best in the sketch about lecturing authors.

**The Music**

The music, which appears to have been written by batallions of composers, has in common a quality of mediocrity. The best number, I thought, was one by Harold Rome, in which a fine and resounding tribute is paid to gloom, but, as the song which annoyed me most, a piece about the romances of various eminent political personages, was also by Mr. Rome, there is somewhat less reason for being grateful to the talented composer of the memorable "Pins and Needles."

There is an almost constant waste of talent in "Alive and Kicking," Jack Gilford, a good comedian, has no chance whatever. Carl Reiner, a newcomer to me, gave indications of comic skill, but he, too, had little opportunity. Nor was there much possibility of estimating the talent of a nice-looking singer named Patricia Bybell, who was hardly even allowed to finish her songs. The evidence is that "Alive and Kicking" started out with ambitious hopes of being a smart topical revue, but it got bogged down in composers and sketch writers, with unhappy results.

**"ALIVE AND KICKING"**

Musical review with lyrics by Paul Francis Webster and Ray Golden; music by Hal Borne, Irma Jurist and Sammy Fain; additional music and lyrics by Sonny Burke, Leonard Gershe, Billy Kyle and Sid Kuller; special music and lyrics by Harold Rome; sketches by Mr. Golden, I. A. L. Diamond, Henry Morgan, Jerome Chodorov, Joseph Stein, Will Glickman and Michael Stuart; choreography by Jack Cole; scenery and costumes by Raoul Pene Du Bois; musical arrangements by Lehman Engel; orchestral arrangements by George Bassman; staged by Robert H. Gordon; presented by William R. Katzell and Mr. Golden at the Winter Garden Theatre, January 17, 1950, with a cast including the following:

David Burns, Lenore Lonergan, Jack Gilford, Carl Reiner, Jack Cole and his dancers, Bobby Van, Dolores Star, Rae Abruzzo, June Brady, Margaret Baxter, Patricia Bybell, Jack Russell, Mickey Deems, Eve Lynn, Margery Oldroyd, Madelaine Chambers, Rex Thompson, Sam Kirkman, Jack Cassidy, Gwen Verdon, Marie Groscup, Velerie Camille, Ruth Davis, Jean Harris, Paul Olson, George Bockman, Marc Hertsens, Jack Miller, Louise Kirkland, Earl William, Jay Harnick, Bryn Corey, Ray Stephens, Jean Ball, Laurel Shelby and Sylvia Chaney.

## DAILY NEWS
January 18, 1950

# In 'Alive and Kicking' the Writers Outnumber the Players—Alas!

By JOHN CHAPMAN

In the printed program of "Alive and Kicking," the revue which was presented at the Winter Garden last evening, the list of people who wrote and designed and directed the show seems to be longer than the list of those who sing and dance and act it. If the first group had shown as much talent as the second, I'd have come away from the theatre in a cheerful mood. But the writers and other creators have pretty generally fallen down on the job, leaving the dancers, singers and comedians with not enough to do. So I've come away from the theatre in not too good a state of mind.

In the company are Jack Cole and Gwen Verdon, very interesting dancers; David Burns, a comedian who can make practically anything seem funny; Lenore Lonergan, who sounds as though she had studied singing under Bill Klem, the baseball umpire, and a young fellow named Bobby Van who behaves like an upcoming Ray Bolger.

Among the best things in "Alive and Kicking" is a dance by the Jack Cole group illustrating an innocuous ballad titled "One Two Three." While Boy and Girl are crooning the thing, some absurdly costumed dancers illustrate it with a really funny routine which has a crazy Mack Sennett quality. Another of the good things is a song by Harold Rome, executed by Miss Lonergan, which burlesques all those terribly sad and sexy French numbers which Edith Piaf sings to glassy-eyed sentimentalists who frequent night clubs.

**Material Runs Short.**

I thought Mr. Burns was very funny as a surgeon performing several operations for a television audience, and that Miss Lonergan was at her best in a sketch about a woman making phonograph records of tiny tales for tiny tots; but in each of these sketches the material ran short and left the performers rather desperate.

Those who have contributed music, lyrics, sketches and sets to "Alive and Kicking" include Paul Francis Webster, Ray Golden, Hal Borne, Irma Jurist, Sammy Fain, Sonny Burke, Leonard Gershe, Billy Kyle, Sid Kuller, I. A. L. Diamond, Henry Morgan, Jerome Chodorov, Joseph Stein, Will Glickman, Raoul Pene du Bois and, says the program, "others."

I couldn't guess who all the "others" are and don't particularly want to know, for those listed have not distinguished themselves. But I think the management should find a place in the program credits for one of the best features of the show — the drumming of the tall and handsome Negro tympanist in Lehman Engels' pit orchestra. I'm told his name is Jimmy Collins. Mr. Collins put zing into everything he did last evening, and when he wasn't working he appeared to be enjoying the show more than I did.

New York World-Telegram and The Sun

January 18, 1950

# 'Alive and Kicking' Gets Nobody's Kicks

By WILLIAM HAWKINS.

"Alive and Kicking," the new revue with a mile or so of credits, proves that the more different talents involved in this type of entertainment, the brighter the evening is likely to be.

It is a thoroughly delightful entertainment by an eager talented company. From it, Jack Cole, whose dancing and choreography are already widely known, emerges as an entertainer of star proportions, and Lenore Lonergan, a legitimate comedienne of mettle, reveals varied and astute talents in the musical field.

It would be wild exaggeration to call "Alive and Kicking" faultless. What is more important is that it recognizes the values of what it has. When the material is not above average in inspiration, the pruning shears have been out, and bows are dispensed with. Consequently when it may not grip you, it does not bore you, which is certainly a virtue.

**Cole's Dramatic Punch.**

As any show of this sort should, "Alive and Kicking" improves as it goes along. Mr. Cole dances five numbers, the most striking of which is "Coal Scuttle Blues" done with a minimum of production to a wild accompaniment of brasses and drums in sympathetic syncopation.

Mr. Cole creates dramatic punch with the lazy, limp manner in which he prowls around the stage, until the moment comes to indulge in tremendous bursts of energy. Through the program he moves from the ascetic black and gray calisthenics of a Shaker meeting, to the jeweled lushness of "Abou Ben Adhem" and a florid Calypso, strikingly assisted by Gwen Verdon and Marie Groscup.

**As Sharp as She's Different.**

Miss Lonergan is at her best in her toughest assignment, a solo satire on the Edith Piaf singing school. She solemnly mixes up French and English, with hilarious results in song and narration.

The blond actress has an intelligent assurance for this work, which results in her apparently being oblivious to the audience while she employs a sense of entirely expert timing. The sketch about making juvenile records is familiar in accent and business, but Miss Lonergan builds it unerringly, and she is just as sharp as she is entirely different, in a defiant torch song and a speech about sex.

Of the others in the cast, David Burns waits longest for a real chance, until a mad affair about radio giveaways in an operating room. Jack Gilford tops his other appearances in a recognizable and delightful affair about a man who quits smoking. Carl Reiner is amusing and agreeable, if sometimes frantic, as he appears every other minute, and Bobby Van is an able young eccentric dancer and singer who has yet to develop any great individuality.

The songs are not the show's strong point, having whisked off a first act ballad after a single chorus, somebody had the welcome, wonderful notion of kidding the inevitable second solemn love song.

While two young couples down stage languidly warble of love, behind them appears a group of dancers like sloppy Dali creations. Among others, an Indian Chief, a scarecrow and a flapper pantomime their ridiculous, brutal contempt for each other in the wildest imaginable behavior. If there must be those weary love lyrics in revues, and evidently there must, this is a very pleasant way to take them.

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Journal and American

January 18, 1950

# Ardent and Inelegant But Alive and Kicking

By ROBERT GARLAND

When, at the Winter Garden, "Alive and Kicking" gets tough to follow, you can pass the time by counting the names that have gone into its making. Unless programs are mistaken, these add up to twenty-three. Now, when you consider that William Shakespeare wrote "Hamlet" all by himself——

Take the "Alive and Kicking" songs, of which there are fourteen. These are credited to five "lyric and music" writers, four "additional lyric and music" writers and one "special lyric and music" writer. Then there are seven sketch concoctors, exclusive of those group-listed as "and others."

**There is one designer of the sets and costumes. And one manipulator of the light bulbs. And two arrangers of the music, one vocal, one orchestral. And one director of the over-all production. And one choreographer. He is Jack Cole. He, his dancers and his dances, dominate the Broadway evening,**

Although a Hollywood celebrity, Mr. Cole is remembered hereabouts for his choreography in the gone but not forgotten "Magdalena." At the Winter Garden, his contributions to "Alive and Kicking" are "I Don't Want Him," "Abou Ben Adhem," "Calypso Celebration," "Propinquity" and "Cole Scuttle Blues"...

Of these, more good Jack Cole news later on.

* * *

## Spoof Unification

Taking "Alive and Kicking" as it comes, the opening, celebrating the title song, has to do with A Milkman, A Girl in Bed and an energetic chorus that is glad to be unburied. Just why, is never made quite clear. "Pass of the Pentagon" follows, a spoofing of the Army-Navy-Air Force unification.

**Then "I Didn't Want Him," in which Jack Cole first dances. This time with Gwen Verdon. Comes next some singing. "What a Delightful Day" with burlesque madrigal singers a la "Call Me Mister" and "Lend an Ear." And "Meet the Authors," a nose-thumbing crack at literary luncheons.**

"A World of Strangers" is, I think, a sentimental song. Arthur Maxwell and Patricia Bybell sing it. "Cry, Baby, Cry" is not, I know, a sentimental song. Lenore Lonergan and two others sing it. "Abou Ben Adhem," coming in between, is a Jack Cole production number. It's good and showy!

"I Never Felt Better" has a Wife a Barney and a Charlie. I forget just what they do. "One Word Led to Another" is sung and danced by Bobby Van, who's been keeping his eyes and ears on Ray Bolger. "Calypso Celebration," without which no revue's complete, closes the opening stanza...

Mr. Cole stands out after his fashion in this one.

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## An Ardent Revue

The closing stanza opens with "Building Going Up," an optimistic song in which the United Nations Building seems to be rising in the Winter Garden's balcony. "Hippocrates Hits the Jackpot" is the sketch about the operation. Painful though it is, it is, at the same time, frequently quite funny.

**In "Propinquity," Jack Cole lets himself and his dancers loose to words and music not too unlike the "Necessity" number in "Finian's Rainbow." "I'm All Yours" again gives Bobby Van, plus Jessie Elliott, an opportunity to follow in the dancing-singing footsteps of Ray Bolger, plus Marie Foster and "Amy."**

"Once Upon a Time" re-employs the personality of Lenore Lonergan, as does "French with Tears," ha-ha-ing the water-eyed wailings of Edith Piaf. This is the large lady's high spot. "Cole Scuttle Blues" is Jack Cole's last appearance, along with Gwen Verdon and Marie Groscup.

Taken this way, as it comes, William Katzell and Ray Golden have, in "Alive and Kicking," an ardent and inelegant "new musical revue" in which the intentions are superior to their fulfillment, the mummers are superior to their material and Jack Cole, his dancers and his dances, are tops...

**But it is alive and it does do some clever kicking!**